DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 274 942 CG 019 446

TITLE	Getting the Most Out of High School. (Tips on College Planning.)
INSTITUTION	Michigan State Board of Education, Lansing.
PUB DATE	[86]
NOTE	24p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Admissions Counseling; Adolescents; *College Bound Students; College Choice; *College Preparation; *Educational Counseling; Grade 9; Higher Education; *High School Freshmen; High Schools; *Secondary School Curriculum

ABSTRACT

This booklet presents tips for high school freshmen who plan to go to college after graduation. Reasons are given for students to begin college planning in the ninth grade and the issues of high school classes and money for college tuition are discussed. Basic skills needed in reading, writing, oral communications, mathematics, and reasoning are listed. Types of high school courses to take and the number of years to take them are suggested in the areas of communication skills, mathematics, science, foreign languages, social studies, arts, health and physical education, and electives. A sample 4-year class planning guide is included for completion by the student. Student attitudes, course challenges, and self-discipline are explained, and extracurricular activities are described. The process of college admissions is presented and the importance and timing of grades, classes, career decisions, college choice, standardized tests, and admissions and financial aid applications are described. Sample college planning charts for both college admissions and financial aid are included. (NB)

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Getting The Most Out Of High School

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(Tips on College Planning)

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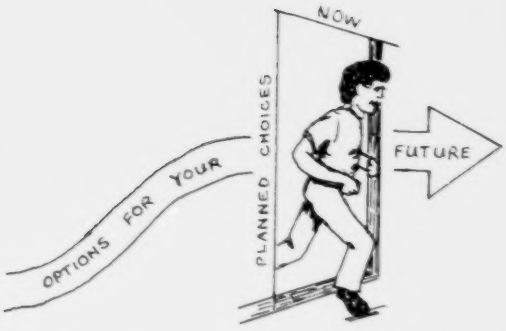
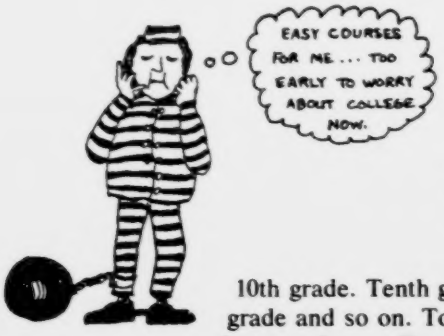
Planning Now?



High School Classes

As you enter the 9th grade, life after high school may seem a long way away. No need to be concerned about it, yet, right?—**Wrong!** A little careful planning now will help keep your choices open for more types of careers and college training later on!

Why is it important to plan your high school classes now? Many colleges require certain types of high school courses to get in. Also, many of the more advanced courses at your high school require that you take other classes first.



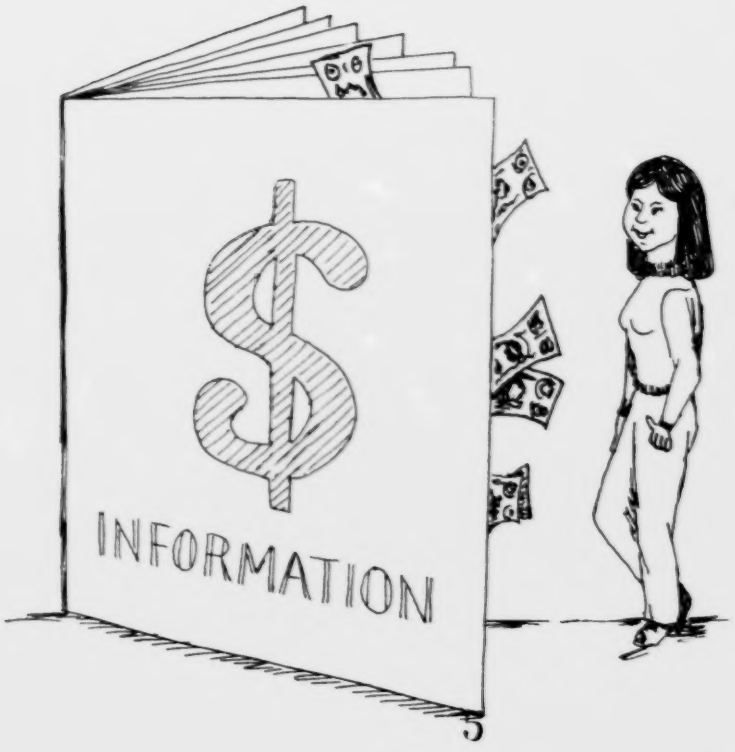
As a 9th grader, you may, for the first time, have some real choices as to what you will be studying. The "easy" classes may really look good to you, but they may limit some of your choices later on. The classes you take in 9th grade prepare you for 10th grade. Tenth grade classes prepare you for 11th grade and so on. Together, these classes prepare you for your future. For a growing number of careers, that future **must** include college or some other form of training after high school. To get the most out of high school and prepare yourself for the broadest number of possible careers, it is important to plan your high school courses carefully now, as you begin. The choices you make now will have real consequences later on!

Don't be concerned if you do not know exactly what you want to do after high school. Most 9th graders (and many 12th graders) don't. Taking a broad range of high school classes will keep your options open for a variety of career areas and may just help you decide what you want to do later.

Talk with your parents and your school counselor regarding the high school class choices available. With your counselor, develop a plan that you can use in choosing the high school classes that will be most useful to you.

Money

Also, don't rule college out because of concerns about money. Today, various kinds of financial aid help most students and their families pay the bill for college or other technical training after high school. This pamphlet has some tips on how you and your family can begin to plan for higher education expenses and explore financial aid application procedures. Remember, financial aid is available if you need it and apply; but only if the college or technical school you are interested in admits you.

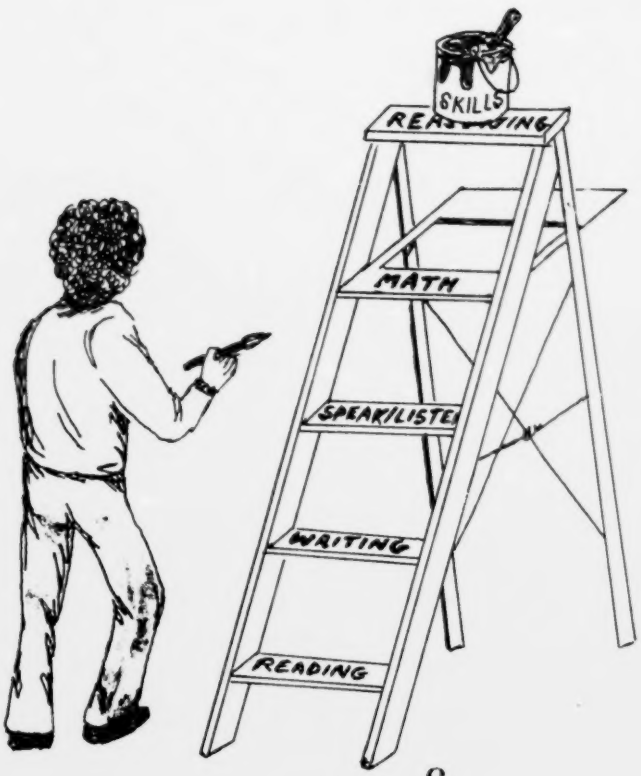


Skills You Need!

Most colleges and employers are looking for people who have the following basic skills:

1. *Reading*—being able to understand what is being said quickly and clearly, in a variety of written materials.
2. *Writing*—being able to express yourself clearly and effectively on paper or a computer.
3. *Speaking and Listening*—being able to talk clearly to others and to understand what they are saying.
4. *Mathematics*—being able to understand basic number concepts and to use them in a variety of settings, including computer applications.
5. *Reasoning*—being able to identify and think through problems and issues.

Your high school classes can help you develop these important skills!

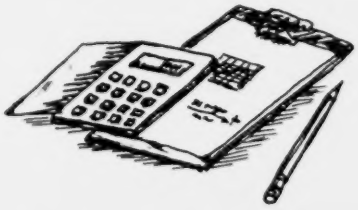


Types of High School Courses to Take!

Every high school has its own unique names for the classes it offers. In making your high school course plan with your counselor—be sure to include the following types of classes:

Class Area	Amount Suggested
1. *English/Communication Skills*—courses covering reading (literature), writing and speaking.	4 Years

2. *Math*—courses covering algebra, geometry and advanced math (trigonometry and calculus).	3-4 Years



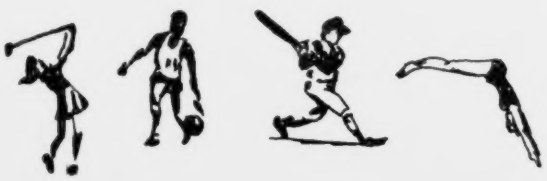
3. *Science*—courses covering biology, chemistry, physics, etc. At least 2 laboratory science courses should be taken.	3-4 Years

4. *Foreign Language*—courses in Spanish, French, German or other languages.	2 Years or More (of 1 language)

5. *Social Studies*—courses in history, economics, government, political science, geography, etc. 2-3 Years

6. *Performing and Fine Arts*—courses in theater, music, art, etc. 1-2 Years

7. *Health and Physical Education*—gym and health courses. 1 Year or More



8. *Electives*—courses in typing, word processing and computer orientation are suggested. Most schools also offer helpful career orientation and vocational information classes. 1 Year or More

SAMPLE 4-YEAR

Class or Course Area	Class Titles 9th Grade
English/Communication Skills	
Math	
Science	
Foreign Language	
Social Studies	
Performing and Fine Arts	
Health and P.E.	
Electives	

CLASS PLANNING GUIDE

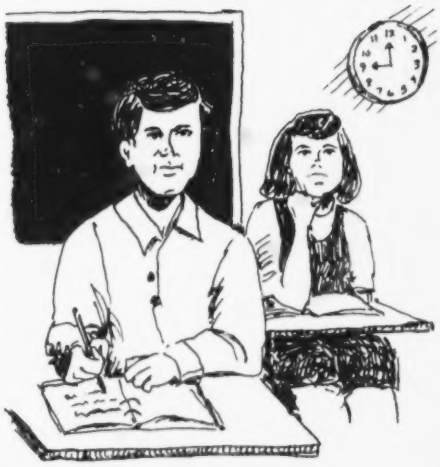
Class Titles		
10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade

Signing Up Isn't Enough!

Getting the most out of high school means more than just signing up for the right types of classes and "warming a chair" in the classroom! It means studying! reading! writing! doing homework! practicing!.

**Challenge Yourself*—
by taking the toughest class sections or levels you can handle. Colleges and employers are looking for quality, not just quantity! With your counselor, decide whether some advanced courses might be good for you in some areas. This might mean advanced placement classes at some high schools or courses at a local college at others. Check such options out with your counselor.

**Discipline Yourself*—
to study and prepare daily for each class you sign up for. This also means getting to class on time each day. Developing good study and attendance skills now will serve you well in the years ahead. Really, you are learning how to learn—setting goals, priorities and work schedules, using outside library resources, taking notes and following instructions.



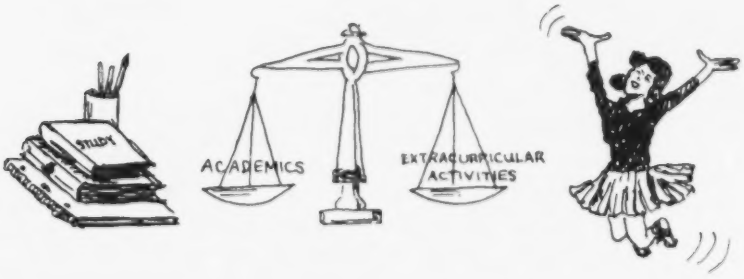
**Project Yourself—*
by getting involved in class discussions and asking questions when something is unclear. By participating, you will not only learn more about the subject, but about yourself, as well.

Attitude is very important in this process. If you think a class is "worthless," it may turn out that way. If you try to learn something from each class, you will.

HELP! There's Got to Be More to High School than Studying!

You're right! Extracurricular activities are an important part of your high school life. Clubs, debate, band, athletics, social activities, community activities, part-time jobs, church and family activities all are valuable.

They serve to broaden your outlook and also help develop the skills needed in life. Nothing helps teach basic math and human relations better than that part-time job in the grocery store or gas station. Nothing applies the principles of political science better than class elections and student government.



The important thing here is balance! It's important to have the opportunity to get involved in extracurricular activities that interest you. However, don't over-commit yourself to the point where your study time really starts to suffer. Everyone's ability to juggle school work and extracurricular activities will be different. Discuss such commitments with your family and counselor, as you proceed. Establishing and maintaining the balance between school work and extracurricular activities is your responsibility.

College Admissions:

The formal college admissions process generally begins in the 12th grade. However, there are several things to pay attention to now that will broaden your choices and make the college selection decision easier when the time comes:

When	What
Grades 9-12	*Grades!* High school grades are important in many college admissions decisions. It always pays to do your best. Remember, this applies to seniors who can't wait to get out of high school (disease is commonly known as "senioritis"), just as it applies to 9th graders. Local community college study remains a possibility even if high school performance has been a problem.
Grades 9-12	*Classes!* What you've taken in high school is often as important as your grades.
Grades 10-12	*Careers!* Explore career options with your family and high school guidance office. The school counseling office has a variety of tools to help you compare your interests and abilities to those needed in various fields. They can help you identify careers that might be of interest and provide information on the type of training that is needed and where you can get it.
Grades 10-12	*Colleges!* Start to get information from schools that you might like to attend. Go to college nights offered by your high school, visit campuses, etc. Talk to your counselor and parents about different kinds of schools. Commercial publications, describing individual colleges and technical schools, are also available in your high school library and guidance office or career center. Find out about the academic programs offered, specific school admissions requirements and procedures, campus life and costs.

Grades 11-12

Standardized Tests! Many colleges will require some test for admissions or placement purposes. Check with your high school counselor and sign up for the tests needed.

Remember, the American College Test (ACT) is required for the State of Michigan Competitive Scholarship Program.

Grade 12

College Admissions Applications! Get them from the college or your high school and fill them out carefully. Be sure to observe filing deadlines.

Grade 12

Financial Aid Applications! Get them from your high school counselor and fill them out as directed. Be sure to observe filing deadlines or priority dates for all programs to which you are applying.

These forms may look difficult, but most high schools and local colleges can answer questions regarding their completion.

Sample College Admissions Planning Chart

Your family, high school counselor and representatives of the colleges or technical schools you might be interested in have the information you need, to complete the following college selection chart. It is a good idea to keep copies of all college materials you receive in one place and keep a copy of all materials sent to them.

1. What are your strongest and weakest academic areas?

Strengths *Weaknesses*

2. What kinds of things can you do to work on your weaknesses and improve on your strengths?

Ways to Work on Weaknesses

Ways to Improve on Strengths

3. What kinds of activities do you enjoy and what kinds of things do you dislike doing?

Things I Like to do

Things I Do Not Like to do

4. In which careers can I best use my academic strengths doing things I like to do most?

5. What do I have to do to get ready for these careers and where is the training offered?

6. Admissions Requirements—
what it takes to study there:
+ grades—grade point average
+ test scores needed
+ importance of extra-curricular activities
+ importance of recommendations
+ other factors considered by school

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7. Your personal reactions to the school, based on your research, visit, college night attendance, etc.

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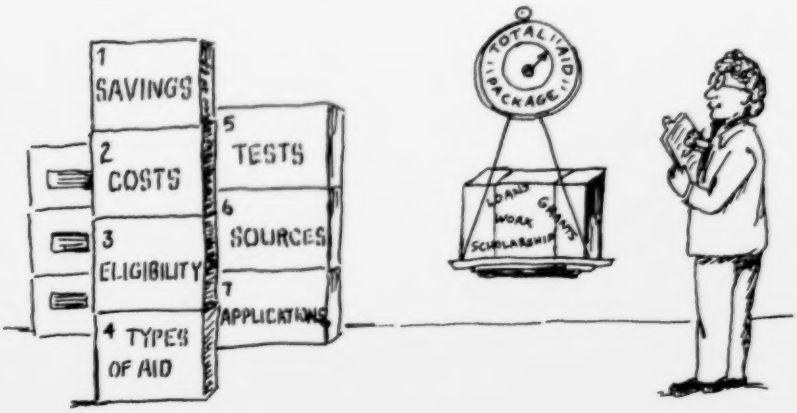
8. Admission Applications—
+ completed—deadline
+ college response

Colleges/Technical Schools You Are Interested In

School 1 ( )	School 2 ( )	School 3 ( )

Financial Aid:

Don't let concerns about cost keep you from going to college! Most students now in college or technical school are using financial aid to help pay the bill. While you will not complete financial aid applications until your senior year in high school, there are several things you and your family can start doing soon that will make the process easier to understand:



Early Grades-Grade 12 — *Savings!* It is important for each family to carefully analyze its own financial situation and prepare as best it can to help meet the expenses related to college attendance. Consulting a tax expert or financial planner may help. You should help, too, by getting summer jobs and saving some of the money you earn.

Grades 10-12 — *Costs!* As you start to gather college information, be sure to find out what it costs per year—tuition and fees, room and board, transportation and books and personal expenses all need to be included in these estimates.

Grades 10-11 — *Aid Eligibility!* Much of the student financial aid available today is based on the idea of "*need*". For this kind of money, a formula is applied to your family's financial situation to see how much help can be provided from the home. If it is less than the cost of attending, then "need" for financial aid is present:

Cost of College, University or Technical School Selected
– Family Contribution
= Need for Financial Aid "Package"

Your high school guidance office has materials available that your family can use to help estimate what your potential eligibility for "need-based" aid might be at different cost colleges.

Types of Financial Aid! Student financial aid comes in the form of scholarships, grants, loans and work. If the family applies and need is present, a "*package*" made up of these various types of assistance will be developed by the college.

Some financial aid is also based on *grades or test scores*. That's another good reason to study hard and keep your grades up. Check with your high school counselor regarding what tests might be needed for student aid purposes and when they should be taken.

Grades 11-12 — *Tests!* Be sure to take the ACT Exam for the State Scholarship Program. Other tests may also be needed to apply for some other student aid programs. See your high school counselor for dates and registration forms.

Grades 11-12 — *Aid Sources!* Student financial aid comes from a variety of places—federal government, State of Michigan, colleges, the local community and other organizations. It is important to know how and when to apply for all of them. Your high school counselor has further information, listing the major sources of student aid and how and when to apply. It is to your advantage to apply broadly.

Grades 11-12 — *Aid Applications!* These are the forms that must be filled out by your family to apply for "need-based" financial aid.

They need to be completed in January or early February of your senior year in high school. Many high schools will provide evening meetings for families, to help with this process. If such a session is available at your school, attending also during your junior year in high school would help your family to better understand this process.

Sample College Financial Aid Planning Chart

Your famly, high school counselor and representatives of the colleges or technical schools you might be interested in have the information you need to complete the following financial aid planning chart. It is a good idea to keep a copy of all financial aid application materials you and your family complete:

1. What does it cost to go to this school for 1 academic year?
   a. Tuition and fees
   b. Room and board
   c. Books and equipment
   d. Transportation
   e. Incidentals
   f. Total

2. How much do you think your family can pay each year to help meet these costs?
   a. Parents/stepparents
   b. Your personal savings/earnings?
   c. Total

3. How much financial aid do you think you might need to attend (Question 1 minus Question 2)?

4. Is your answer to Question 3 on target? —determine how much financial aid you might now actually qualify for at these schools, using tools available through high school guidance office.

5. What forms do I have to fill out to apply for financial aid at these schools?

6. What is the deadline to apply for financial aid at these schools?

7. Do I know how and when to apply for other sources of financial aid beyond funds that the schools themselves might have available such as:
   a. Pell Grants
   b. State programs
   c. Local community funds

Colleges/Technical Schools
You Are Interested In

School 1 ( )	School 2 ( )	School 3 ( )

Forms Needed

Deadline for Applying

WOW! Sounds Like a Lot to Do!

Not really, if you start now and take it one-step-at-a-time. Following the basic suggestions made will help you get the most out of high school, as you prepare for your future.

Your high school counselor has a variety of other publications available to help you with your high school and college plans.

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